

MSc in Sustainability Management

Sustainability communication

Professors: Ruth Pérez Castro / Ana Freire

Office hours: By appointment

Course Type: Elective

Credits: 3 ECTS

Term: Third

Course Description

Getting it right and making it known. Sustainability Communication will offer you the tools to communicate, both internally and externally, the commitment your organization has towards sustainability. The subject will provide you with the basis for designing communications plans aligned with the business strategy, as well as the criteria for identifying crisis situations or cases of greenwashing.

In this regard, students will learn how to deal with the media to make the most of it: training spokespersons, preparing a press conference, creating radio spots, knowing the channels and audiences, and squeezing the communicative potential of social media through Artificial Intelligence.

Objectives (learning outcomes) and competences

At the end of the course, students should:

- Learn how to draw up a communication plan to disseminate good practices in the field of sustainability, avoiding greenwashing.
- Be able to foresee crisis situations and put together a cabinet with versatile spokespersons to act quickly and resolutely.
- Understand the channels and audiences to be addressed and work on original communication proposals.
- Apply Artificial Intelligence in Social Media analysis to extract insights from user data for improving the profitability and sustainability of our campaigns.

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Note: This document is for informational purposes only. Some contents may change. Students will be duly informed.

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Methodology

The course comprises eight 3-hour sessions, which combine theory lecturing with general debates and applied discussions on business cases and practical exercises. Participants will also engage in presentations of reports or project assignments. Activities will require both individual and group work.

The course also involves a substantial amount of autonomous work outside the classroom, combining readings that will help you to gain a deeper understanding of the material covered in the class.

Evaluation criteria

Three elements concur in the final mark:

- **Final project and presentation (50%):** The final project is used to assess the individual level of knowledge and understanding of each student. It will consist of making a communication plan that allows the student to suggest and develop communication solutions for an organisation. The coherence of the parts will be considered. This item counts for 50% of the final mark. The minimum grade to pass the final project is 5.
- **In-class exercises (30%):** During the lessons, brief on-site exercises will be carried out to put into practice the topics they learned to use. Proactivity will be key to excel in this continuous assessment.
- **Class attendance and active participation (20%):** Attendance in every session is expected and recorded by means of an attendance sheet. It is your responsibility to comply with this measure. Class attendance is compulsory and will be reflected on your final grades; punctuality is a must. Note that unexcused absences reduce your score on the "attendance and participation" element of your final grade. In fact, two or more unexcused absences will result in an automatic score of zero and, likely, a failure mark for the course.

Other evaluation criteria to take into consideration:

Retake

Students who fail the course during regular evaluation will be allowed ONE re-take of the examination/evaluation. Students that pass any Retake exam should get a 5 by

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default as a final grade for the course. If the course is also failed after the retake, students will have to register again for the course the following year.

No-show

In case of a justified no-show to an exam, the student must inform the corresponding faculty member and the director(s) of the program so that they study the possibility of rescheduling the exam (one possibility being during the “Retake” period). In the meantime, the student will get an “incomplete”, which will be replaced by the actual grade after the final exam is taken. The “incomplete” will not be reflected on the student’s Academic Transcript.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is to use someone else’s work and to present it as one’s own without acknowledging the sources properly. All essays, reports or projects handed in by a student must be original work completed by the student. By enrolling at any UPF BSM Master of Science and signing the “Honor Code,” students acknowledge that they understand the schools’ policy on plagiarism and certify that all course assignments will be their own work, except where indicated by correct referencing. Failing to do so may result in automatic expulsion from the program.

Bio of Professors

Ruth Perez Castro is a journalist specialized in corporate communications and currently is the Press Officer of the UPF Barcelona School of Management (UPF-BSM). Prior to joining UPF-BSM, she worked in both press and broadcasting media, specializing in politics and gender. She also has experience in communication consultancy, as well as in event organization and protocol.

Ruth has a bachelor’s degree in Journalism and Political Science and Public Administration from the Pompeu Fabra University (UPF) and a master’s degree in Political and Institutional Communication from UPF-BSM. Her lines of expertise are focused on media and public relations, leadership, gender, and institutional communication.

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Ana Freire holds a PhD (cum laude) in Computer Science and currently leads the Department of Operations, Technology and Science at UPF Barcelona School of Management. She has a vast experience in Artificial Intelligence, Information Retrieval and Social Media Analysis. She has collaborated with worldwide prestigious institutions such as Yahoo Labs, the University of Glasgow and the National Research Center of Italy.

Ana has contributed with more than 50 scientific publications, several patents and accumulates numerous national and international recognitions. She was included by Business Insider in the list of 23 young Spaniards called to lead the technological revolution. She also received the Female Young Scientific Talent Award from the Spanish Royal Academy of Sciences and Mastercard, and the Ada Byron Jr Award from the University of Deusto.

Reading Materials/ Bibliography/Resources

No textbook is required for this course. All the required material will be provided. Any readings, notes, handouts, dataset, or additional course material will be available through the course website.

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